

# Upbeat

## Great Accompaniment: CCM's Workshop Series Complements Our Music Instruction

"I try to forget about the student's age and forget that I am the 'authority' and just listen. Once we connect as two people, then it becomes: 'What are we going to discover today about music?'"

**KITTY CHEUNG-EVANS**  
CCM piano instructor

Listening, connecting and discovering. That's the essence of music education at CCM, in our classroom instruction, in our Music Achievement Program (MAP) — and in our Workshop Series. While music fundamentals and technical competence are certainly part of the package, CCM also strives to create well-rounded young musicians who have a curious, empathetic approach to life as well as music.

The Workshop Series helps accomplish that. Says CCM piano instructor Kitty Cheung-Evans, who has led a number of different workshops, "As we mature, we start to like things that we didn't appreciate

before because our life experience allows us to better relate to them."

### CCM IS A MULTILAYERED EXPERIENCE...

Kitty speaks from her own experience. Her life's journey has taken her from Hong Kong to Canada to New England, with occasional excursions to Paris to pursue a love of baking. She also studied art history as an undergrad, which made her the ideal choice to lead CCM's "When Art Collides with Music" workshop. Students are encouraged to explore the similarities between music and visual art, as well as appreciate the differences. "Visual art stimulates a different part of your brain," Kitty says.

# THE WAITING IS OVER



We've had to put a whole lot of things on hold for the past two years. We've waited patiently to be with our families and friends, to attend that awesome concert we bought tickets for, to go on vacation, attend class, or see our coworkers without masks. At CCM, our faculty were all waiting to get back to performing in-person before live audiences. We might have been waiting, but we certainly haven't been idle.

I like to look forward. To plan. How can we bring more music to connect our community? What programs can we create? Here at CCM, all these months of waiting have been months spent planning and I'm extremely pleased to say—it's go time!

This fall we are excited to roll out our collaboration with the Berklee Institute for Accessible Arts to provide music classes for children with developmental needs. CCM is one of the only programs in the Metrowest area that provides accessible music classes taught by an instructor with advanced training in the field.

Next on the list is our collaboration with the Boys & Girls Club of Assabet Valley in Maynard, where we are now providing after-school music classes for their Club members. Once a week the kids take part in ukulele classes which also provide the foundational skills of music.

And remember not so long ago when we couldn't sing in public and choruses were super spreader events? We're bringing music back in a big way with our Community Sing Series. Bring the kids, your parents, and your neighborhood, we're gathering at CCM to sing three times this year and celebrate the seasons with song. The Community Sing will be under the direction of our Chorus Director, Gray Leiper.

Over the past year, we've been exploring how to deepen our student's experience of developing the foundational skills of music outside of their lessons. We launched the CCM Listening Project in January, and the brilliant CCM faculty are planning a Festival of Creativity workshop weekend for January 2023.

**I'd say that good things come to those who wait.**

A photograph of Gray Leiper, a man with a beard and short brown hair, wearing a dark gray jacket over a light-colored shirt. He is sitting on a black piano bench, smiling at the camera. His hands are on the keys of a black grand piano. The background shows a wooden staircase railing and a wooden wall.

# 'ONE UNIFIED VOICE': CCM GIRLS CHORUS LEADER GRAY LEIPER HEADS OUR 'COMMUNITY SING' PROGRAM

**As the leader of CCM's Girls Chorus, Voice Teacher Gray Leiper has a clear objective: "to create one unified voice."**

The challenge lies in getting students to understand that the goal is not to homogenize — it's to harmonize. "I tell my students, 'You don't need to compare your voice to your friends' voices,'" Gray says. "Every voice is different."

Blending those different voices in a collaborative, supportive way creates a chorus that is unique as well as unified. "I try to create a team environment," Gray says. "Yes, there are solos, but at some point you need to step back from the solo and come back into the ensemble."

## **BACKING VOCALS**

With his focus on collective success, and an interest in vocal styles that runs from Bruno Mars to German opera—which he has performed twice for German audiences—Gray is the ideal person to lead not only CCM's Girls Chorus, but also our Community Sing program (see sidebar).

A key to developing students' confidence, Gray says, is to emphasize what each student brings to the chorus — not what they lack. "What you give to the group will benefit the group so much more," he says. "Give what you can, and through that you can discover your strengths as well as what challenges you have, whether it's in your voice or your understanding of music or whatever it might be."

You can also find a way to overcome those challenges through mutual support. "Maybe one of your fellow chorusers is strong in those areas that you find challenging," Gray says, "so you can help one another."

That strengthens the overall chorus, creating a whole that's greater than a collection of individual talents. "One of things I love about chorus, especially in the age range I teach (9-14)," Gray says, "is that each of these kids has challenges, but subconsciously they're helping each other out."

That creates a positive learning environment that is critical for kids that age. Says Gray, "I like to frame all of my teaching as 'This is a safe space to create and experiment with the sounds you can make.'"

## **SING IT FROM THE ROOFTOPS**

Gray learned early on what was possible through a combination of commitment, a positive attitude and proper support. Growing up in Houston, Texas, he had no background in classical music, but an interest in choir and theater led him to pursue voice lessons. His vocal instructor, Michael Vaughn, saw Gray's potential. The next thing Gray knew, he was singing Italian opera.

That started a journey that has taken Gray from Houston to Oklahoma City University, where he received a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance, to the Boston Conservatory at Berklee, where he earned a Masters of Music in Vocal Pedagogy and Opera Performance.

Through it all, he has retained the enthusiasm that prompted him to sign up for voice lessons as a kid. It just *felt* right. "I think singing, whether you do it professionally or not, is just good for you," he says. "It's a full-body activity that gets you breathing and gets you emoting and gets you thinking about how you can make certain sounds and let go of inhibitions in a wonderful, freeing kind of way."

At CCM, Gray continues to preach the pure joy of vocal performance through Concord Girls Chorus, as well as across the Concord area through Community Sing.



## COMMUNITY SING: CELEBRATING THE SEASONS BY BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER AND SINGING TOGETHER

Although his specialty at CCM is Girls Chorus, Gray Leiper offers individual voice lessons to a broad spectrum of students. "I have one who is about 60 and another one who is 10," he notes. "But in each case, their job as a singer is to tell a story."

Gray gets to share his multi-generational story-telling approach throughout Concord and the surrounding area by way of CCM's Community Sing, a special program that focuses on celebrating the seasons.

For Gray, Community Sing represents what choral singing is. "In the same way people come together to arrange celebrations or make changes to better their

community," Gray says, "a choir comes together to unite their voices in a shared experience. Our October piece, Harvest Moon, spoke to the uniqueness of autumn. The 'dog days of summer' or the "dead of winter" don't apply to autumn because it's not a season that lingers, but one of transition. Every moment is special. In the same way, each song a chorus sings has the potential to suspend time for a moment. It's an opportunity to savor the beauty and abundant gifts of our community."

*There will be another Community Sing in advance of the winter solstice and associated holidays. "In the Pale Morning Light - A Festival of Hope" takes place on Sunday, December 4, from 1:30 - 2:30 pm in North Hall. Concord's annual tree-lighting ceremony follows, and Community Sing participants are encouraged to take part in that as well.*







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## Great Accompaniment: CCM's Workshop Series Complements Our Music Instruction

*Continued from page 1*

"It brings out a different emotion."

Tapping into those emotions can create an enhanced appreciation of all forms of artistic expression on different levels. Toward that end, the CCM Workshop Series helps open students' eyes as well as their ears. Kitty cites Monet's Water Lilies series of paintings as an example. Viewed up close, she says, the oil paintings have a thick texture and the brush strokes are apparent. Step back, however, and the nuances emerge as if by magic.

Music can also be a multilayered experience. "You can hear it in many different ways," Kitty says.

Our cultural music workshops further encourage participants to embrace new ways of hearing music and making connections by delving into music traditions from around the world. Upcoming workshops feature Turkish music as well as an informative lecture on the history of The Enlightenment.

Attendees get new insights into the classic works of Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven by getting a better understanding of their historical context.

### ...AND A SHARED EXPERIENCE

In addition to providing an enhanced appreciation of music and other art forms, the Workshop Series also fosters improved collaboration and communication. Kitty leads the chamber music workshop "Let's Duet!" which enables instrumentalists of all kinds to learn the art of playing together. In a similar vein, "Exploring Teamwork" gives musicians an opportunity to meld their own style with others to create new sounds.

Other popular workshops include "Got Rhythm?" and "Improvisation I and II," which are designed to allow participants to develop self-confidence as well as self-expression in an informal setting that encourages mutual support. "I liked the improvisation/composition class because we got to make up pieces using our own techniques," said 11-year-old Oliver Rodriguez, a CCM piano student.

Oliver also liked the music theory workshop. "We had fun lessons and

I learned a lot about inversions and how to write different variations of our melodies," he said.

Fellow piano student Pip Clinard, 13, also enjoyed the music theory workshop. "Theory makes me better at understanding the piano music that I am practicing instead of just blindly memorizing it," Pip said.

Eleven-year-old Olive Clinard, on the other hand, liked the hand drumming workshop because it provided a break from piano lessons and allowed her to try something new. "It was like having a mini drum lesson," she said.

The support participants receive through the workshops is particularly important for students who are receiving one-on-one instruction. "Playing piano can be a very lonely activity," Kitty says.

Connecting through the workshops is a way for solo students to connect more broadly with the community. "It is," says Kitty, "amazing to hear what they have to say."

For their part, the students are excited to have that opportunity. Said Oliver, "I was very glad I could go to these workshops and I hope to attend more this year!"

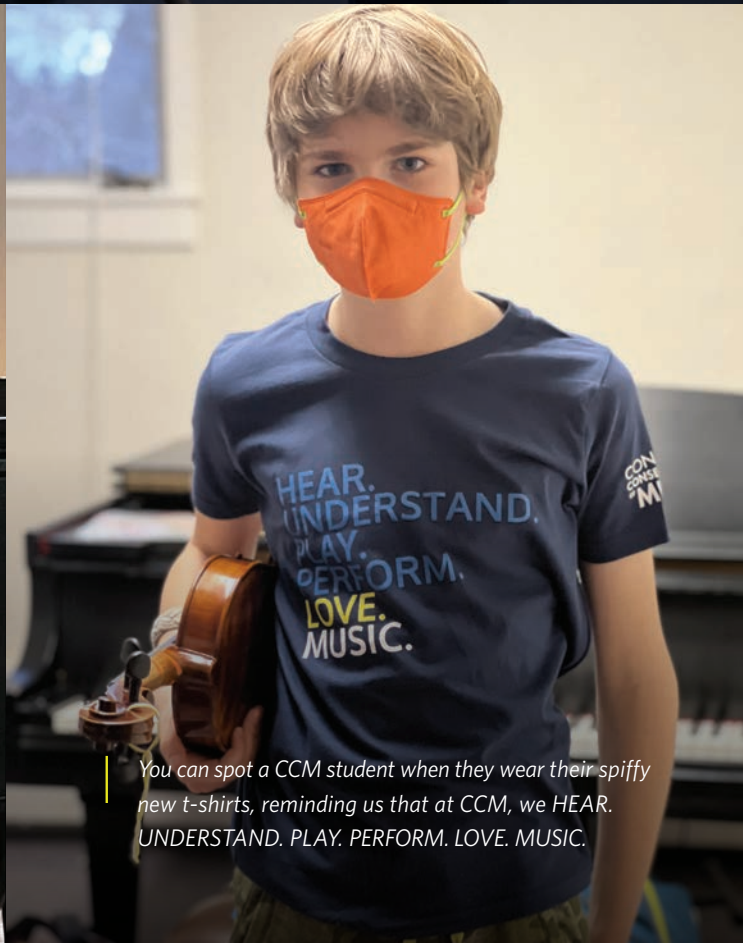




**MISSION** To foster a sense of community through music by providing accessible, high-quality music education and performance opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and skill levels.



*Dedicated and experienced teaching artists providing individual lessons are the "secret sauce" to CCM's student success. CCM offers a myriad of performance, class, and workshop opportunities to encourage and promote student growth.*



*You can spot a CCM student when they wear their spiffy new t-shirts, reminding us that at CCM, we HEAR. UNDERSTAND. PLAY. PERFORM. LOVE. MUSIC.*





# MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN 2021

As we enter a new, re-energized fall semester, we are pleased to present The Concord Conservatory of Music Making a Difference. We look back at our 2021-2022 year, a year when we welcomed all of our students and faculty back to the school. CCM kept students, teachers, and guests safe through another year of COVID challenges. We maintained student engagement and quality at pre-pandemic levels.

- After five years, we reintroduced our Early Childhood music program, connecting kids in a much-needed social setting, and making music fun and accessible for our young students.
- CCM introduced the Listening Project – designed to help students practice their active listening skills and encounter a wide range of music that they might never have heard before. The Listening Project has also reached our greater community, connecting us all with music.
- Live concerts, lectures, and all-school recitals brought you and the community back to CCM. We explored Music & Medicine, the American Roots Concert and Masterclass series, and Jazz, all performed by CCM's talented faculty, guest artists, and our students.
- CCM took to the internet with a spectacular new website and branding, which showcase the heart of CCM.

The staff, faculty, and board of directors worked together to keep our doors open and mitigate the pandemic. But it was also the result of your generosity. Friends like you, who value thriving arts programs and music education, keep the music alive at the Concord Conservatory of Music.

**Your generosity makes music happen. We invite you to take some time and explore the collection of stories and performances where you will witness resilience, ingenuity, and perseverance in action at CCM.**



**THANK YOU** to the generous individuals, companies, and foundations whose financial support to our Annual Fund and Financial Assistance Fund play a crucial role in allowing CCM to serve our community.

*Gifts received September 1, 2021  
through August 31, 2022*

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\* CCM Monthly Promoters

\*\* Gifts made in memory of  
Raymond F. Miller, Jr.



"A calm, reassuring approach with consistent support and quality instruction has made my child feel that learning music is a really important thing."

**MARCIA A.**  
CCM parent





# CCM Concert & Lecture Series 2022–2023 Season

## **MUSIC & THE COSMOS, CONCERT & LECTURE**

*Friday, October 21, 2022, 7:30 pm*

Guest speakers, Observational Astrophysicist Erin Kara of MIT, and Brad Wells of the Grammy Award-winning Roomful of Teeth. Explore the intersection of music and space and its sounds and delight in a chamber music concert performed by the talented Concord Conservatory of Music faculty.

## **TURKISH MUSIC LECTURE**

*Friday, November 4, 7:00 pm*

Explore traditional Turkish classical world music with Berklee Professor of World Music Bengisu Gokce.

## **BELLE ÉPOQUE MUSIC ENSEMBLE**

*Friday, November 18, 2022, 7:30 pm*

An evening of exceptional cabaret, burlesque, and belle époque music performed by the ensemble BENE with CCM faculty members Fabrizio Mazzetta, Masako Jasmine Yotsugi, and guest soprano Sonia Jacobson.

## **MUSIC OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT, LECTURE**

*Thursday, January 12, 2023, 7:00 pm*

A lecture on the time period, the ideologies, and the people—Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven.

## **WHEN ART COLLIDES WITH MUSIC, LECTURE**

*February 8, 2023, 5:00 pm*

When art collides with music, we'll explore how visual art/sculptures intertwine with music between subjective and abstract ideas. Presented by CCM faculty member Kitty Cheung-Evans

## **MUSIC & WATER, CONCERT & LECTURE**

*Friday, March 3, 2023, 7:30 pm*

Concord Conservatory of Music partners with OARS and The River Stewardship Council to present Music & Water, an evening of appreciation for the beauty of our local river sheds and music inspired by water.

## **THE OKEE DOKEE BROTHERS, A FAMILY CONCERT**

*Saturday, April 1, 2023, 2:00 pm*

We welcome back the fun and ever-popular American bluegrass and American roots children's music duo! The GRAMMY® Award-winning Okee Dokee Brothers blend their passion for the outdoors with Americana Folk music.

## **SOUTHERN RAIL, A BLUEGRASS CONCERT**

*Saturday, April 29, 2023, 7:00 pm*

Local bluegrass band featuring CCM faculty member Rich Stillman on banjo. As the Boston Herald said, Southern Rail gives us, "First rate bluegrass...precise harmonies, sharp instrumental work...soaring and lush."



*This summer, CCM Early Childhood Instructor, Holly Jennings, led several "Storytime Takeovers" at both branches of the Concord Library. On this day, the Concord Rec. Department campers were also taking part in the musical fun.*

## CONCORD CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

Concord Conservatory of Music is a nonprofit music school serving Concord, MA, and 15 surrounding communities. We are a creative and supportive community of musicians of all ages and levels. Our mission is to foster a sense of community through music by providing accessible, high-quality music education and performance opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and skill levels.

Located in the West Concord Union Church, CCM's community-based programming invites others to experience and appreciate not just the music but also the joy of creating it.

We welcome you to explore our programs online at [www.ConcordConservatory.org](http://www.ConcordConservatory.org), or give us a call at 978-369-0010

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**HEAR.  
UNDERSTAND.  
PLAY.  
PERFORM.  
LOVE.  
MUSIC.**

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